United Nations A/54/PV.97

General Assembly

Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

97th plenary meeting
Thursday, 25 May 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ingólfsson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 125 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/54/730/Add.6)

The Acting President: In the letter contained in document A/54/730/Add.6, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications contained in document A/54/730 and addenda 1 to 5, Burkina Faso has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: reports of the General Committee

Fourth report of the General Committee (A/54/250/Add.3)

The Acting President: In its fourth report, the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that an additional item, entitled "Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects", should be included in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include in the agenda of the current session this additional item?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Committee further decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the additional item should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 8 and 167 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: reopening of the consideration of agenda item 167

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

The Acting President: Members will recall that agenda item 167 was closed at the 70th plenary meeting, held on 6 December 1999. The item, which was closed inadvertently, should have remained open for consideration during the fifty-fourth

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

00-44879 (E)

session, in the light of the last paragraph of resolution 54/65.

In that paragraph, the General Assembly invites the Secretary-General to take the appropriate steps to conclude with the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty an agreement to regulate the relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission, to be submitted to the General Assembly for its approval.

May I take it, therefore, that the Assembly agrees that agenda item 167, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization", remains open for consideration during the fifty-fourth session?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 106 (*continued*)

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Draft resolution (A/54/L.85)

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 106 to the Third Committee. Members will also recall that the item remained open for consideration during the fifty-fourth session.

In order for the General Assembly to proceed expeditiously on the item, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 106 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 106? As I hear no objection, we shall now proceed accordingly.

In connection with agenda item 106, the General Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/54/L.85.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.85, entitled "Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Jin (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I wish to inform Member States that, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/54/L.85, under operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to convene a Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002 devoted to an overall review of the outcome of the First World Assembly on Ageing, as well as to the adoption of a revised plan of action and a long-term strategy on ageing. Implementation of the requests contained in this operative paragraph, in particular the costs for the convening of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, would be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

In operative paragraph 3, the General Assembly would accept the offer of the Government of Spain and decide that the Second World Assembly on Ageing would be held in Spain in April 2002. Should the General Assembly accept the offer of the Government of Spain to host the Second World Assembly on Ageing, in accordance with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 40/243, the difference in costs between New York and Spain would be borne by the host Government.

In operative paragraph 6, the Commission for Social Development would serve as the preparatory committee for the Second World Assembly on Ageing and be open to participation of all Member States of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies and observers, in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly.

There is provision in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 for substantive and conference servicing of the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-ninth and fortieth sessions. The provision contained in operative paragraph 6 would imply the servicing of two sessions of the preparatory committee, one in 2001 and the other 2002, and would require the provision of conference servicing, including interpretation in all six languages, the translation, editing and publishing of the associated documentation in all of the languages, estimated at $169,000 per session.

Provision has been made in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 not only for meetings programmed at the time of the budget preparation, but also for meetings authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings are consistent with the pattern of meetings of past years. Consequently, no additional resources would be needed for the conference servicing for the meetings of the preparatory committee in 2001. The resource requirements for the preparatory committee in 2002 would be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

Under operative paragraphs 8 and 9, the Secretary-General would be invited to establish a technical committee, funded through voluntary contributions and composed of experts geographically balanced to assist in the formulation of proposals during the preparatory process.

In operative paragraph 12, the General Assembly would encourage voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund on Ageing to support preparatory activities of the Second World Assembly, including the participation of least developed countries.

The requests contained in operative paragraphs 8 and 12 will be carried out through funding from voluntary contributions. It is anticipated that voluntary contributions will be forthcoming to support the requests.

As regards the use of voluntary contributions to support the participation of least developed countries in the Second World Assembly, it should be noted that this would imply an exception to the provision of General Assembly resolution 1798 (XVII) of 11 December 1962 on the payment of travel and subsistence allowances to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations. In addition, it is the understanding of the Secretariat that the support to be provided to least developed countries would consist of the payment from extra-budgetary resources of the travel cost for one representative from each least developed country to attend the Second World Assembly.

In summary, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, no additional requirements would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.85?

Draft resolution A/54/L.85 was adopted (resolution 54/262).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 106.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Human rights questions

Draft resolution (A/54/L.84)

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 116 to the Third Committee. Members will also recall that the item remained open for consideration during the fifty-fourth session.

In order for the General Assembly to proceed expeditiously on the item, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 116 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 116? As I hear no objection, we shall now proceed accordingly.

In connection with agenda item 116, the General Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/54/L.84.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.84, entitled "Optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.84?

Draft resolution A/54/L.84 was adopted (resolution 54/263).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote after the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote

are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Batoréu (Portugal): The European Union welcomes the adoption today by the General Assembly of the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child: on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. We hope that those two legal instruments will become important tools for the promotion and protection of the human rights of all children around the world.

The optional protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, which implements some fundamental principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, represents a significant step towards improving the standards of protection accorded to children against those heinous practices of exploitation. Our goal is to eliminate those practices, and we stand ready to support further efforts to combat any practices that violate the rights of the child in this field.

The optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict also constitutes a fundamental complement to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and especially so at a time when we are experiencing an increasing number of armed conflicts in which children are increasingly targeted and brutalized, with very negative consequences for their living conditions and for their enjoyment of their human rights.

The European Union would like to extend to all those who participated in the work of the two drafting groups its appreciation for the remarkable spirit of cooperation and the constructive approach they demonstrated, which allowed us to achieve this successful outcome. The European Union hopes that these two optional protocols will be subject to early entry into force.

Mr. Hedman (Sweden): Having just joined the consensus on the adoption of draft resolution A/54/L.84, on the question of optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Sweden would like, in addition to the European Union statement, make its position clear as to how we understand article 2 (c) of the optional protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

First, Sweden understands the word "representation" in the definition of child pornography in article 2 (c) to cover only visual representation. Secondly, still regarding article 2 (c), Sweden interprets "any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities" not to be applicable to adults acting, posing or dressing as a child.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 116.

Agenda item 90 (*continued*)

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/54/577/Add.l)

The Acting President: I request the Rapporteur of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), Mr. Gualberto Rodríguez San Martín of Bolivia, to introduce the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

Mr. Rodríguez San Martín (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is my great pleasure to introduce the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) on agenda item 90, entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects", contained in document A/54/577/Add.1, for consideration and approval by the General Assembly.

As members may recall, by its resolution 54/81 of 6 December 1999, the General Assembly requested the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to submit a report on its work to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee resumed consideration of agenda item 90 at its 25th meeting, held on 22 May 2000. The Committee had before it the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/54/839). The Special Political and Decolonization Committee also had

before it a draft resolution sponsored by Argentina, Canada, Egypt, Japan, Nigeria and Poland, which it adopted at that meeting without a vote; the draft resolution appears in paragraph 9 of the report of the Committee before the Assembly this morning.

On behalf of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), I have the honour to commend the report to the General Assembly for its consideration and approval.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) that is before it today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401 the Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified to the contrary in advance.

We shall now take a decision on the draft resolution contained in paragraph 9 of the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), document A/54/577/Add.1.

I call on the representative of the United States.

Ms. Healey (United States of America): We support the draft resolution before us today, which, among other things, welcomes and endorses the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. We note the valuable role of the Special Committee in identifying practical measures to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to conduct peacekeeping operations.

We would also like to thank the Chairman of the Special Committee and the Chairman of the working group for their efforts this spring.

In the light of the challenges facing United Nations peacekeeping efforts throughout the world today, we would like to underscore, as stated in the report, that

> "the Special Committee considers it essential for the United Nations to be in an effective position to maintain international peace and security, *inter alia,* by improving the capacity to assess conflict situations, by effective planning and management of peacekeeping operations, and by responding quickly and effectively to any Security Council mandate." *(A/54/839, para. 47)*

To this end, we applaud the report's call for improving planning and management of peacekeeping operations, building capacity for rapid deployment and shortening procurement times for vital resources. We also support the report's call for the replenishment of the logistics base in Brindisi and, in particular, the call for a comprehensive review of all elements within the Secretariat that play a role in peacekeeping operations.

We regret that the Special Committee could not reach agreement on other issues, which we believe would assist the United Nations in efficiently and effectively deploying peacekeepers. These issues include the use of Gratis Type II Personnel, the development of a roster system and the strengthening of the standby arrangements

system. We look forward to working to build a consensus on these proposals in the future.

Peacekeeping operational reform is a top priority for my Government, and we therefore call for further discussion and work on these issues relating to peacekeeping early in the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We would also consider supporting a reconvening of the Special Committee to discuss important peacekeeping issues, including the results of the Secretary-General's panel on peace operations.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/81 B).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 90?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.